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Geographical Mobility:

March 1981 to March 1982

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SYMBOLS USED IN TABLES

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.
 - B Base less than 75,000.
-

Geographical Mobility: March 1981 to March 1982

INTRODUCTION

This report deals primarily with internal migration, or geographical mobility within the United States. The shifts of people between regions, between cities and suburbs, and between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas are examined, and selected characteristics of movers and non-movers are also shown. Movers from abroad are shown in most of the detailed tables, but the number of persons who moved out of the country is not available.

The mobility data in this report are estimates from the March 1982 Current Population Survey (CPS). These data were derived by comparing residence in 1981 with residence in 1982.

ANNUAL RATES

In the 1-year period between March 1981 and March 1982, about 37 million people, or about 17 percent of the population 1 year old and over, moved to a different residence within the United States (table A). This was not significantly different from the 1980-81 rate. However, comparison with the rates found in the early 1970's and the early 1960's shows that a steady decline in residential mobility has taken place over the last 20 years, with the rate of moving dropping from about 18 percent in 1970-71 and 20 percent in 1960-61.

The decline in residential mobility is attributable primarily to a decrease in the rate of local moves, i.e., moves within the same county. In 1960-61, the rate of moving within the same county was nearly 14 percent; in 1970-71, it was 11 percent; and by 1980-81 and 1981-82, the rate was about 10 percent (table A). Several factors appear to have been responsible for this decline in local mobility rates. Over the 20-year period, the percentage of persons owning their own homes rose from 62 percent in 1960, to 63 percent in 1970,

and 64 percent in 1980.¹ Data from the 1980 Annual Housing Survey show that renters are four to five times more likely to move than homeowners. Therefore, the rise in homeownership would tend to depress slightly the rates of local moving. In addition, recent increases in the cost of homes and interest rates on mortgages have also tended to reduce the rates of local moving. From 1973, the first year that the Annual Housing Survey was conducted, to 1980, the annual rate of moving for homeowners declined from 10 percent to 8 percent.² At the same time, rates of moving for renters did not show a significant decline; between 36 and 37 percent of all renters reported moving in the previous year in both the 1973 and 1980 Annual Housing Surveys.

There was no significant decline in the rate at which persons reported moving between counties in the 21 years between the 1961 CPS and the 1982 CPS. In both 1982 and 1961, about 6 percent of the population reported that they had moved between counties, either within the same State or from a different State. The percentage of the population that had moved from abroad in the 1-year period preceding each survey showed little change over the 20-year period except for a very small increase in the early 1970's that was probably due to circumstances related to the Vietnam war, including the return of many members of the Armed Forces and immigration of refugees from Southeast Asia. There is also some evidence of a very small increase in the percent moving from abroad between the 1981 and 1982 surveys.

REGIONAL PATTERNS

Between 1981 and 1982, the population gains and losses due to internal migration for the four geographic regions of the United States continued the trends begun in the 1960's.³ The Northeast and North Central Regions lost more people than they gained from migration for net losses of 212,000 and 370,000,⁴ respectively. The South continued to be the

Table A. Annual Rates of Mobility: 1960-61, 1970-71, 1980-81, 1981-82

Period	Different house in the United States	
	Total	Same county
1960-61.....	20.0	13.7
1970-71.....	17.9	11.4
1980-81.....	16.6	10.4
1981-82.....	16.6	10.3

¹U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1960 Census of Housing, Vol. I, Part 1, U.S. Summary, table 3, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1963; 1970 Census of Housing, Vol. I, Part 1, U.S. Summary, table 3, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1972; and 1980 Census of Housing, HC80-1-A1, U.S. Summary, table 1, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1983.

²U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Housing Reports, Series H-150-73, Annual Housing Survey: 1973, Part D, *Housing Characteristics of Recent Movers*, table A-1, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1975; and Current Housing Reports, Series H-150-80, Annual Housing Survey: 1980, Part D, *Housing Characteristics of Recent Movers*, table A-1, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1982.

³U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 368, *Geographical Mobility: March 1975 to March 1980*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981.

⁴The difference between these estimated net losses is not statistically significant.

major recipient of these interregional migrants, with a net gain of 470,000 persons. The West traded moderately large gains and losses with the other regions to show a small net gain that was not statistically significant. The immigrants and out-migrants for the four regions and their resultant nets are shown in table B.

Table B. Immigrants, Outmigrants, and Net Migration for Regions: 1981-82

(Numbers in thousands)

Region	In-migrants	Out-migrants	Net migration
Northeast.....	473	685	-212
North Central.....	793	1,163	-370
South.....	1,482	1,012	+470
West.....	931	819	* +112

*Not significantly different from zero.

The South and the West continued to have the largest percentage of movers within the same region. Rates of moving within regions by type of mover are shown in table C. The rates at which persons living in the South and West moved between States within the same region were twice those for the other two regions. While about 2 percent of the residents of the South and the West moved between States within their region of residence, only about 1 percent moved between States within the Northeast and North Central Regions. At the same time, the South and the West also had higher rates of moving within the same State. The West had the highest rate of within-State mobility (nearly 18 percent). The South, however, had only a slightly higher rate of within-State mobility than the North Central Region—14 percent and 13 percent, respectively. The Northeast had the lowest rate of moving within the same State—only about 9 percent.

Table C. Rates of Moving Within Regions: 1981-82

Region	Movers within region	
	Same State	Different State
Northeast.....	9.4	0.7
North Central.....	13.1	0.8
South.....	14.4	1.8
West.....	17.6	1.8

CITIES, SUBURBS, AND NONMETROPOLITAN AREAS

The flow of movers from all metropolitan areas combined, as defined in the 1970 census⁵, to nonmetropolitan parts of the country was nearly balanced by a corresponding flow in the other direction between 1981 and 1982 (table D); 2,366,000 persons left metropolitan areas for nonmetropolitan residences, while 2,217,000 persons moved into metropolitan areas from nonmetropolitan territory. The net loss due to migration from central cities was nearly off-

set by the net gains of the suburbs; all central cities combined experienced a net loss of 2,509,000 persons, while the suburbs collectively gained a net of 2,360,000 persons. Persons leaving central cities overwhelmingly chose to move to the suburbs, and twice as many went to the suburbs of the same SMSA as to the suburbs of a different SMSA—2,654,000 and 1,347,000, respectively. Only 1,201,000 of the 5,202,000 persons leaving central cities went to nonmetropolitan parts of the country. New central-city residents were most likely to have lived in the suburbs before they moved; only one-third of them came from nonmetropolitan areas.

Most movers to suburban areas of SMSA's came from the central cities—4,001,000 people as compared with only 1,355,000 from nonmetropolitan areas. However, those people who left the suburbs were somewhat more likely to move to a central city of an SMSA than to move to a nonmetropolitan location.

Persons leaving nonmetropolitan areas most frequently moved to the suburbs of an SMSA rather than to a central city—1,355,000 to the suburbs versus 862,000 to the central cities.

RACE AND SPANISH ORIGIN

Blacks have slightly higher rates of moving than Whites: about 18 percent of Blacks changed residence between March 1981 and March 1982, while 17 percent of Whites moved. Not only rates but patterns of moving vary by race

Table D. Movers Between Central Cities, Suburbs, and Nonmetropolitan Areas: 1981-82

(Numbers in thousands)

Movers to central cities.....	2,693
From suburbs.....	1,831
From nonmetropolitan areas.....	862
Movers from central cities.....	5,202
To suburbs.....	4,001
To nonmetropolitan areas.....	1,201
Net for central cities.....	-2,509
Movers to suburbs.....	5,356
From central cities.....	4,001
From nonmetropolitan areas.....	1,355
Movers from suburbs.....	2,996
To central cities.....	1,831
To nonmetropolitan areas.....	1,165
Net for suburbs.....	+2,360
Movers to nonmetropolitan areas.....	2,366
From central cities.....	1,201
From suburbs.....	1,165
Movers from nonmetropolitan areas.....	2,217
To central cities.....	862
To suburbs.....	1,355
Net for nonmetropolitan areas.....	* +149

⁵Metropolitan areas must be defined in terms of the 1970 census until the CPS sample is redesigned.

*Not significantly different from zero.

Table E. Mobility Status by Race and Spanish Origin: 1981-82

Mobility status	All races	White	Black	Other	Spanish origin ¹
Total movers.....	100.0	84.0	12.6	3.4	8.1
Different house in United States.....	100.0	84.5	12.7	2.8	7.6
Same county.....	100.0	81.5	15.8	2.7	(NA)
Different county.....	100.0	89.5	7.5	3.0	(NA)
Same State.....	100.0	89.1	7.9	3.0	(NA)
Different State.....	100.0	89.9	7.0	3.1	(NA)
Abroad.....	100.0	67.8	9.5	22.7	26.4
Percent of total population.....	100.0	85.7	11.7	2.6	6.1

NA Not available.

¹Persons of Spanish origin may be of any race.

(table E). Blacks constituted about 13 percent of all movers, but they made up a disproportionately large share of those persons making short-distance moves. Nearly 16 percent of all persons moving within the same county in the United States between March 1981 and March 1982 were Black. At the same time, Blacks were less likely to move from a different county during the 1-year period than Whites. About 8 percent of persons who had moved between counties within the same State or between States were Black.

Whites constituted a somewhat lower percentage of movers within the same county (82 percent) than their percentage of all movers (84 percent). However, they constituted a slightly larger share of those making long-distance moves: about 90 percent of people moving between counties, both within the same State and between States, were White.

These patterns of residential mobility—Blacks making up a disproportionately large share of the local movers (within the same county) and a smaller than average share of longer distance movers (between counties)—have persisted for many years. Similar patterns are found in the data from the 1961 and 1971 Current Population Surveys.⁶

Only about 3 percent of all movers were neither White nor Black. This same proportion held true for movers between counties in the same State or between States, while a slightly lower percentage moved within the same county. Movers from abroad were the only group with a substantial proportion of persons of races other than White or Black; about 23 percent of the movers to the United States from abroad were of other races, while about 68 percent were White and only 10 percent were Black.

Persons of Spanish origin also made up a disproportionate share of movers from abroad. While they constituted only 6 percent of the total population and 8 percent of all movers, persons of Spanish origin accounted for about 26 percent of movers from abroad. Since persons of Spanish origin may be of any race, there may have been considerable overlap between the 246,000 persons of "other races" and the 287,000 persons of Spanish origin who moved from abroad between 1981 and 1982.⁷

⁶U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 235, *Mobility of the Population of the United States: March 1970 to March 1971*, table 1, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1972.

⁷The 1980 Census of Population, PC80-1-B1, General Characteristics, U.S. Summary, table 39, shows that 55.6 percent of persons of Spanish origin reported their race as White, 2.7 percent as Black, and 41.8 percent as "other races".

INTERVAL LENGTH

The mobility questions that are used in the March CPS do not measure the number of moves during a given time period but estimate the number of persons who lived in a different house at the beginning of the period than at the survey date. In other words, the number of *movers* is estimated, not the number of *moves*. Persons who moved more than once are counted only once, and persons who moved out of their current residence but returned by the end of the period are not counted as movers at all. As a result, a count of the number of *movers* in a shorter period more nearly approximates the number of *moves* during that period than is measured in a longer interval which more nearly measures the percentage of the population that is affected by mobility.

The effect of repeat movers on short-interval mobility rates can be illustrated by comparing the 1-year mobility rate from the March 1982 CPS with the 5-year rate derived from data collected in the 1980 survey. According to estimates from the 1982 survey, 16.6 percent of the 221,641,000 persons 1 year old and over were living in a different house in the United States 1 year earlier. By comparison, the 1980 survey shows that 45.0 percent of the 223,719,000 persons 5 years old and over were living in a different house in the United States on that date 5 years earlier.

MIGRATION UNIVERSE

The mobility data in this report are derived from the answers to questions on residence 1 year before the survey date and the geographical location of the respondent's current residence. A facsimile of the question on previous residence is shown below. These questions were asked for all members of the survey household who were 15 years old and over on the survey date. Previous residence for persons under 15 years old was allocated based on the responses of their parents or other members of the household. (See the section entitled "Allocations of Mobility Status" for a further discussion of the allocation of mobility data for children and other persons for whom no response or only partial responses to the mobility questions were given.)

The universe sampled includes all civilian noninstitutional households and members of the Armed Forces living off base or with their families on base. (For a more detailed discussion of the sample selection and limitations of the sample and survey design, see "Source and Reliability of the Estimates.")

53A. Was . . . living in this house (<i>Apt.</i>) 1 year ago; that is, on March 1, 1981?
Yes <input type="radio"/> <i>7</i> No <input type="radio"/> (<i>Skip to 54</i>)
53B. Was . . . living here 5 years ago on March 1, 1977?
Yes <input type="radio"/> (<i>next person</i>) No <input type="radio"/> (<i>Skip to 55A</i>)
54. Where did . . . live on March 1, 1981?
A. Name of State, foreign country, U.S. possession, etc. <i>7</i>
B. Name of county <i>7</i>
C. Name of city, town, etc. <i>7</i>
D. Did . . . live inside the limits of that city, town, village, etc.
Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>

ALLOCATIONS OF MOBILITY STATUS

In the March 1982 CPS, complete mobility information was not reported for about 6 percent of all persons 15 years old and over, and the mobility questions were not asked for any persons under 15 years of age. In these cases, missing mobility data are allocated by values obtained for other family members (if available) or from other active respondents with similar demographic characteristics. The previous residence assigned to a nonrespondent is that obtained for another person with similar demographic characteristics who did respond and who has been selected systematically in the order in which individual records are processed. Characteristics used in these allocations (when mobility data for other family members are not available) are age, race, years of school completed, metropolitan status, and State of current residence. (State of previous residence is used instead of State of current residence if State but not place or county of previous residence is provided by the respondent.)

RELATED REPORTS

Statistics on the mobility of the population have been collected annually in the Current Population Survey since 1948.

Tables similar to those in this report were published for the 1980-81 period in Series P-20, No. 377, *Geographical Mobility: March 1980 to March 1981*; for the 1975-80 period in Series P-20, No. 368, *Geographical Mobility: March 1975 to March 1980*; for the 1975-79 period in Series P-20, No. 353, *Geographical Mobility: March 1975 to March 1979*; for the 1975-78 period in Series P-20, No. 331, *Geographical Mobility: March 1975 to March 1978*; for the 1975-77 period in Series P-20, No. 320, *Geographical Mobility: March 1975 to March 1977*; for the 1975-76 period in Series P-20, No. 305, *Geographical Mobility: March 1975 to March 1976*; for the 1970-75 period in Series P-20, No. 285, *Mobility of the Population of the United States: March 1970 to March 1975*; for the 1970-74 period in Series P-20, No. 273; and for the 1970-73 period in Series P-20, No. 262. Data for the 1970-71 period were issued in Series P-20, No. 235, and similar statistics were published in this series each year beginning with the report for 1947-48.

Statistics on geographical mobility of the population for cities, counties, SMSA's, urbanized areas, State economic areas, States, divisions, regions, and the United States appear in Volume I of the 1970 Census of Population (based on State of birth or residence 5 years before the census). Detailed statistics on mobility status by race and sex for these areas and the United States appear in Volume II, Subject Reports: PC(2)-2A, *State of Birth*; PC(2)-2B, *Mobility for States and the Nation*; PC(2)-2C, *Mobility for Metropolitan Areas*; PC(2)-2D, *Lifetime and Recent Migration*; PC(2)-2E, *Migration Between State Economic Areas*; and PC(2)-7E, *Occupation and Residence in 1965*. Some other subject reports of the 1970 census present statistics on mobility status in relation to the main subject of this report.

Statistics on geographical mobility of the population between 1975 and 1980 appear in 1980 Census of Population, PC80-1-C Series, *General Social and Economic Characteristics*.